



britepaths

**FY2024–FY2026
Strategic Plan**



Who we are

Britepaths is a social sector organization serving Northern Virginia, predominantly in the Fairfax County area. Since 1984, Britepaths has been a dedicated leader in developing sustainable solutions meeting the challenges faced by low-income families. Our programs stabilize clients facing economic crisis, foster personal empowerment, and support the needs of children. Britepaths provides food, financial assistance, financial education, and workforce development services for clients. Britepaths harnesses the power of skilled volunteers to help us deliver our services. We also work extensively with other organizations and agencies in the community. Britepaths values collaborative partnerships that offer diversity of services for clients and the opportunity to holistically serve each client.

What is important: opportunity to serve

The social sector is made up of nonprofit organizations which strengthen the community by providing the services that citizens need that the government cannot fully provide. As Britepaths has evolved over the years, we have sought to fill the gaps in service – providing for low and middle income families when many services targeted the homeless, developing a financial empowerment program to supply the tools and support to help our clients achieve self-sufficiency, and offering emergency assistance during times of need.

We consistently provide critical services that contribute to economic stability and mobility of the community. We also frequently are the voice of those we serve, advocating on their behalf to local government and other community members. Britepaths is committed to meeting the needs of diverse populations, including the underrepresented and those who have been exceptionally hard-hit by societal and economic changes, by working with existing and new partners to leverage volunteers and resources, extending capacity, and providing an array of effective services.

Reflecting on where we are

Britepaths and our clients, along with the rest of the world, have seen unprecedented change and disruption due to the COVID-19 pandemic and its impact across all aspects of the economic and social fabric of our community. This period has presented not only innumerable challenges, but also opportunities to adapt and learn. We have grown stronger and more agile as an organization. We are ready to embrace the next evolution of our strategy with the understanding that, regardless of the challenges we collectively face, we will continue to provide critical and impactful support to our clients.

Britepaths' Strategic Plan is conceived as a 3-year plan; however, given the dynamic nature of the current economy and continuing impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, in the summer of 2025, the board will re-evaluate the Strategic Plan. At that time, the Strategic Planning Committee and the Board of Directors will reassess these goals and objectives and make adjustments as needed.

The strategic planning process

We have learned through the experiences of the past few years that global change and external factors have a material impact on our planning. In this Strategic Plan, we have committed to keeping goals and objectives on an aspirational level to allow us to adapt and adjust to changing circumstances and environmental factors on a real-time basis. While we have structured the Plan to allow us to remain nimble, we have focused on the priorities and values that shape our organizational DNA that are fundamental to our success in serving the community.

New to this year's plan is our commitment to strategic goals related to Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). We believe that the values of DEI are fundamental attributes of a high performing organization that are essential to effectively serving the needs of our community and clients. As such, we are focused on identifying and mitigating unconscious bias for all aspects of our internal operations, programs, and communities we serve in order to champion equitable opportunities for all. We are also focused on ensuring that Britepaths is a diverse organization, so that we reflect the communities that we serve.

Identifying our priorities and path forward

The Board of Directors examined community needs based on Fairfax County strategic plans and budgets, and surveyed the Board and staff to best determine where our priorities should lie over the next three years. We determined that focusing on our workforce development program and the agile delivery of our financial empowerment program to better access a broad client base were priorities to best support our traditional clients, new immigrants, and others to earn a living wage and reach self-sufficiency.

Following the necessary pivot to fully online services, Britepaths has realized the advantages that online/hybrid services offer to our clients, volunteers, and employees. We will continue to prioritize technology enabled services and diversity in how we provide services to allow the greatest number of clients to participate in our programs.

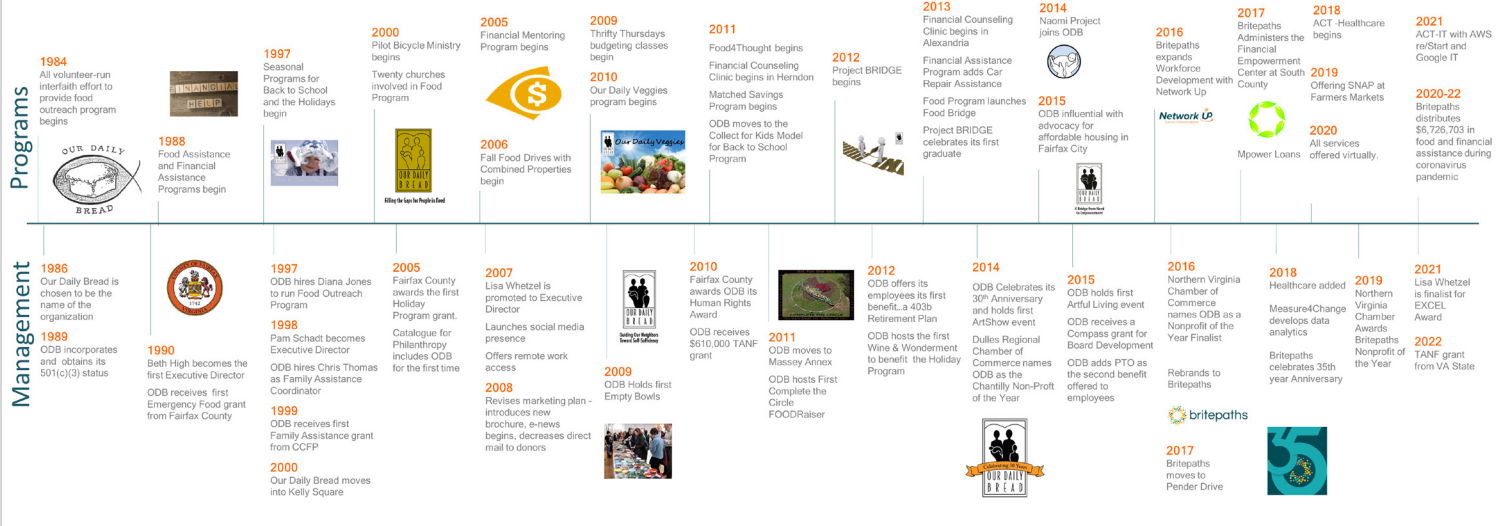
As we look forward to the next three years, we have considered the challenges and opportunities ahead of us. The unprecedented global, political, societal, and economic uncertainties we currently face challenge our ability to identify meaningful strategic goals for Britepaths. However, one imperative was consistently clear throughout the planning process: We must remain nimble and able to quickly react to changes in our environment and community.

We will also continue to build on the strength of our reputation and relationships in Northern Virginia. Britepaths' history of client success, ability to adapt and partner with agencies for emerging needs (most notably during the pandemic), and our commitment to continually evolve our services to match community needs will be the foundation of our strategy in the coming years.



The Journey from Our Daily Bread to Britepaths

Thirty-seven years in the making...



MISSION*

Britepaths provides our neighbors in need with short-term safety-net services and empowers them to work toward long-term self-sufficiency. We deliver our services with respect, compassion, and equity, always preserving the dignity and self-esteem of our clients.

VISION AND VALUES*

Britepaths' Vision:

Bridging Need to Empowerment

At Britepaths...

We seek to learn the unique circumstances of each client, and craft solutions with the whole person in mind.

As we guide others towards self-sufficiency, we accept that teaching others means nurturing our own self-awareness.

We embrace our differences and see them as a source of strength.

We commit to individual and organizational efforts to nurture respect, compassion, dignity, equity, and self-esteem for each member of our community – inclusive of staff, clients, and supporters.

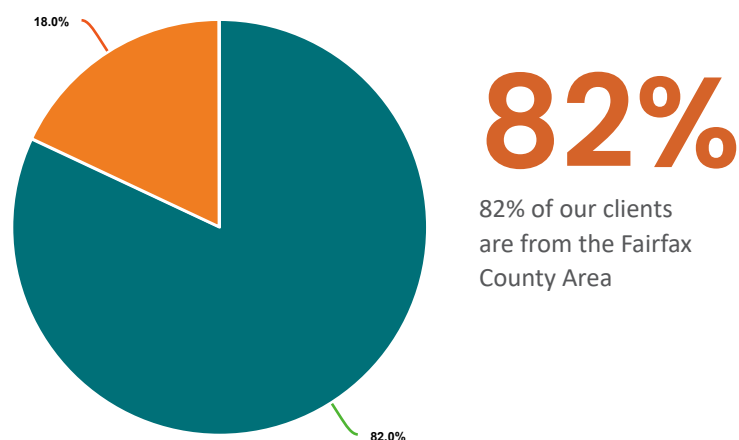
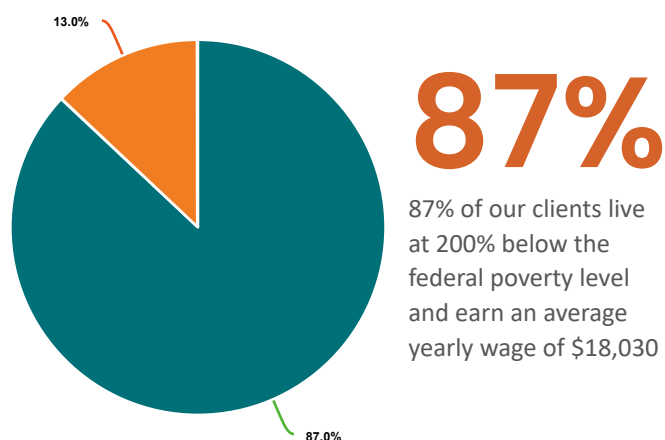
We value and respect our neighbors regardless of race, gender, age, sexuality, ability, religion, national origin, and gender identity.

WHO WE SERVE

Britepaths serves the low and middle-income families and individuals affected by unexpected expenses who find themselves spiraling from self-sufficiency to the brink of homelessness.

87% of our clients live at 200% below the federal poverty level and earn an average yearly wage of \$18,030 in an area where the average rent for a one-bedroom apartment is \$2,238 per month, or \$26,856 per year. The majority of our clients, 82%, are from the Fairfax County area.

Our clients identify with the following race descriptions: 47% Black/African American, 34% White/Caucasian, 11% Asian, 7% Multiracial, 0.9% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 0.4% Native Hawaiian/Other Pacific Islander. Additionally, 26% identify their ethnicity as Hispanic, while 74% identify as Non-Hispanic. The “head of household” was reported by our clients as 61% female and 39% male. In addition to family services, we have programs that directly target students, resulting in 60% of all our clients being children.



0.9% American Indian/
Alaskan Native

0.4% Native Hawaiian/
Other Pacific Islander



60% of our clients are children

COMMUNITY NEED AND BRITEPATHS RESPONSE

Community Need

Fairfax County is one of the wealthiest areas in the U.S. with a median household income of \$130,000. Unfortunately, this prosperity is not equally shared and significant inequality exists along both socioeconomic and racial lines.

- While 27% of Fairfax County households earn over \$200,000 per year, nearly 21% earn less than \$75,000 per year and over 13% earn less than \$50,000 per year.
- More than 7.1% of Fairfax County residents live in poverty.
- The average median household income for white residents is ~\$141,000, compared to ~\$89,000 for Black residents and ~\$86,000 for Hispanic residents (2020 data).
- The child poverty rate for Hispanic and Black residents is 15% to 20%, compared to less than 3% for White residents (2020 data).



The needs of Fairfax families at the lower end of the economic spectrum are significant and wide ranging. They cover economic, financial, and social dimensions. These needs include:

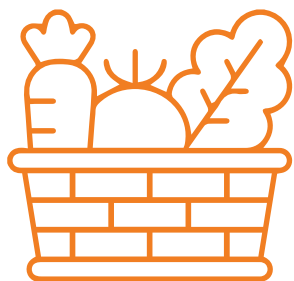
- Stable employment with higher wages
- Longer-term financial planning and goal-setting, including the ability to save and invest
- Affordable housing
- Access to higher quality – and affordable – health care services
- Access to better educational opportunities
- Access to capital at reasonable costs (for small businesses and entrepreneurial endeavors)
- Equal access to opportunities for economic and social advancement (for communities of color)

Britepaths Response

Britepaths' work is aimed at addressing these economic and social inequities and supporting individuals and families that have been left behind in the midst of the region's growing prosperity. We are particularly focused on serving those families most in need, especially those earning less than \$50,000 per year. For these families, emergency services that prop up self-sufficiency can be just as critical as other forms of longer-term support services. We are also focused on supporting communities of color in the Fairfax County area, which currently make up the majority of our clients.

Britepaths recognizes that the needs of our target community are broader than we, or any one organization, can address. To this end, we aim to effectively work with other nonprofit and government organizations to meet the needs of the community in a more comprehensive manner. Ultimately, we believe that collective action is necessary to make significant and sustained inroads toward solving intractable problems such as breaking the cycle of poverty.

Our current work – and core competency – is focused on the following four areas:



Food Security



Financial Assistance



Financial Empowerment



Workforce Development

We believe these services are a vital form of support for our target community and can make a significant difference in the lives of our clients.

3-YEAR STRATEGIC PLAN

Priority 1: Meet the Holistic Needs of Our Clients

- Actively seek opportunities to expand the reach and impact of Britepaths' stabilization and personal empowerment initiatives.
- Improve synergies between Britepaths' existing programs, including by meaningfully increasing the percentage of clients served by more than one program.
- Increase focus on "outcomes" vs. "services provided" to better assess the effectiveness of our programs.
- Identify the key "adjacency services" that are of most impact to our clients but are beyond the scope of Britepaths' core services.
- Establish and/or expand partnerships with external organizations to provide these "adjacency services," thereby improving our ability to meet the needs of clients in a more holistic manner.

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

- Identification of new funding sources and/or resources to increase the number of clients served by our core programs (eg. food program, financial assistance, financial empowerment, workforce development).
- Increase in the percentage of Britepaths clients who transition from Stability Programs to Personal Empowerment Programs by 3% by 2026.
- Implementation of a well-defined approach to utilizing "core" plus "adjacency" services to better meet the needs of the community.
- Maintain the number of meaningful partnerships with external organizations at a level of at least 50 annually.
- Clearer understanding of how a more holistic service approach is leading to better outcomes for clients (utilizing both quantitative and qualitative data).

Priority 2: Prioritize Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI)

- Ensure that Britepaths incorporates its DEI Vision and its desire to encourage and celebrate a wide range of diversity in all aspects of its decision-making and programming, including but not limited to diversity in race, age, gender identity, sexual orientation, nationality, culture, physical and mental ability, education, spiritual beliefs, family status, and socio-economic status.
- Continually research, assess, and provide guidance to the staff and the Board to challenge inaccurate assumptions and ensure that Britepaths accurately considers as many diverse perspectives as possible in its decision-making and programming.
- Ensure that incorporation of the DEI Vision into Britepaths' decision-making and programming specifically includes consideration of
 - (1) who, or which groups of people, may or will be affected both positively and negatively by any decision,
 - (2) incorporation of prior feedback or other participation in the decision-making process by those affected by the decision or involved in the program,
 - (3) equitable access, opportunity, and advancement for all, and
 - (4) how the decision would support an atmosphere in which all people feel included and welcomed.
- Assess and take action to ensure that the composition of Britepaths' staff, volunteers, and Board reflects the diversity of the communities Britepaths serves.
- Assess programming annually to ensure it meets the diverse needs of Britepaths' community and clients as reflected in feedback from staff, volunteers, and clients.
- Create a comfortable, welcoming environment where every person feels heard, understood, and appreciated.

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

- Completion of an annual cultural assessment that includes information gathering and analysis of feedback from clients, staff, and volunteers regarding Britepaths' effectiveness in achieving its DEI priorities, specifically including
 - (1) the composition of the staff and Board relative to the community Britepaths serves,
 - (2) the equitability of Britepaths' internal and external policies and messaging,
 - (3) the incorporation of DEI priorities into staff and Board decision-making, and
 - (4) specific goals and action items for improvement.
- Review and analysis of feedback regarding Britepaths' effectiveness in adhering to its DEI priorities from the Client Advisory Group on a quarterly basis, and from staff satisfaction surveys and client surveys as that feedback is provided.
- Provision of assistance to the Client Advisory Group, as requested, to establish its charter, procedures, and processes, and to facilitate its operations and provision of feedback.
- Preparation of decision-making guidelines and regular consultation with managers and the Nominating Committee to ensure that Britepaths incorporates its DEI priorities in staff hiring decisions and during the Board recruiting process.
- Provision of clear, established, and regularly utilized avenues for communication between the DEI Committee and Britepaths' staff, clients, and volunteers regarding any concerns or suggestions relating to Britepaths' DEI vision and priorities.

Priority 3: Enhance Our Services

- Be intentional with the evolution of our programming, staying true to our core strengths and mission, but open to change where it benefits the community.
- Maintain a culture of continuous improvement and flexibility to meet the changing needs of our clients, quickly evaluating and responding to new avenues to serve our clients such as job placement, affordable housing, and mental health services.
- Actively measure the productivity of our programming and make adjustments to align with community needs.

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

- Internal gap assessment coupled with annual community surveys on client needs.
- Semi-annual program assessment with key measurables and performance indicators.
- Conduct routine internal and external scan and pivot accordingly.
- Direct assistance goal-setting and measurement to goal.
- Use established evaluation processes to vet new program ideas.

Priority 4: Diversify and Strengthen Funding

- Support our strategic priorities through an increase in Britepaths' available resources.
- Build and maintain high-impact relationships with new and current individual donors.
- Develop sustainable and mutually beneficial relationships with corporate donors and partners.
- Maintain our existing grants portfolio and leverage our strong reputation and client results to secure new grants.
- Leverage our available data to increase the impact of our donor relationships and grant proposals.

WHAT WILL SUCCESS LOOK LIKE

- Increase individual donor revenue by 35% by the end of FY2026.
- Grow corporate revenue by 30% by the end of FY2026.
- Increase Civic and Social Organization revenue by 25% by the end of FY2026.
- Retain existing grants at current and/or higher levels.
- Source and develop 5 new grants.

INVESTMENTS

Britepaths has a strong history of operational excellence that leverages the incredible talent of our staff, technology enablement, and efficiency in our process. Realizing Britepaths' strategic plan requires that we continue to operate a high performance organization, invest in our infrastructure, and build capacity equal and necessary to meeting our goals.

Britepaths has identified a number of organizational investments that, when successfully implemented, will position us to achieve our 2024–2026 strategic goals.

Investment 1: Attracting and retaining top talent: Advancing the culture, compensation strategy, and development opportunities to maintain a high-performing team.

Investment 2: Resource generation: Maintaining a strong funding model and capabilities to support the strategic plan, and securing and sustaining diverse funding sources over time.

Investment 3: High-performing organization: Continuing to focus on opportunities to simplify, standardize, and automate our processes to have the greatest impact for our clients and stakeholders.

Investment 4: Leadership capabilities and transition: Maintaining Board and staff leadership that have the skills needed to realize our strategy, and effectively planning for role transition.

Investment 5: Strategic partnerships: Building and maintaining the external relationships necessary to realize our strategy, including partners for program delivery, funding, public policy, and improving our internal capabilities to manage these relationships.

Investment 6: Measuring progress: Developing tools, processes, and infrastructure to effectively measure our progress against our strategic goals and adjust as needed.

